

CLAIMS

I claim as deserving the protection of Letters Patent:

1. A dental hygiene apparatus for enabling a flossing of teeth, the dental hygiene apparatus comprising:

5 a dispensing member;
 a means for retaining dental floss relative to the dispensing member;
 an accumulating member; and
 a means for accumulating dental floss relative to the accumulating member;
 whereby dental floss can be dispensed from the dispensing member and
10 accumulated by the accumulating member.

2. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 1 wherein the dispensing member comprises a dispensing ring with an aperture for receiving a finger of a user.

15 3. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 2 further comprising an activating switch operably associated with the means for retaining dental floss relative to the dispensing member for selectively enabling a dispensing of dental floss from the dispensing member.

20 4. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 3 further comprising a means for preventing an accumulation of dental floss relative to the dispensing member including during a triggering of the activating switch.

5. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 4 wherein the activating switch enables a dispensing of a predetermined length of dental floss.

6. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 1 wherein the accumulating member
5 comprises an accumulating ring with an aperture for receiving a finger of a user.

7. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 6 wherein the dispensing member
comprises a dispensing ring with an aperture for receiving a finger of a user.

10 8. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 6 further comprising an activating switch operably associated with the means for accumulating dental floss relative to the accumulating member for selectively enabling a retraction of dental floss relative to the accumulating member.

15 9. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 8 further comprising a means for inducing an accumulation of dental floss relative to the accumulating member during a triggering of the activating switch.

20 10. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 8 further comprising a locking means for preventing a retraction of dental floss from the accumulating member including during a triggering of the activating switch.

11. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 7 wherein the dispensing member and the accumulating member are color coded.

12. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 7 wherein the means for retaining dental floss relative to the dispensing member comprises a dispensing bobbin rotatably retained relative to the dispensing ring and wherein the means for accumulating dental floss relative to the accumulating member comprises an accumulating bobbin rotatably retained relative to the accumulating ring.

10 13. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 12 wherein the dispensing bobbin is disposed within a housing of the dispensing ring and wherein the accumulating bobbin is disposed within a housing of the accumulating ring.

15 14. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 13 further comprising an aperture in the accumulating ring for enabling a passage of dental floss therethrough and further comprising a scrubber element retained relative to the accumulating ring adjacent to the aperture.

20 15. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 13 further comprising an activating means operably associated with the means for accumulating dental floss relative to the accumulating ring for selectively enabling a rotation of the accumulating bobbin to yield a retraction of dental floss relative to the accumulating ring.

16. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 15 wherein the activating means comprises an activating switch in combination with a means for rotating the accumulating bobbin.

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17. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 16 wherein the activating means further comprises a means for selectively engaging the activating switch with the accumulating bobbin wherein a triggering of the activating switch disengages the activating switch relative to the accumulating bobbin.

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18. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 16 wherein the means for rotating the accumulating bobbin comprises a coil spring and further comprising a means for enabling a winding of the coil spring.

15 19. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 7 further comprising a means for varying sizes of the apertures in the dispensing ring and the accumulating ring.

20 20. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 19 wherein the means for varying sizes of the apertures in the dispensing ring and the accumulating ring each comprises at least one removable sizing member.

21. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 19 wherein the means for varying sizes of

the apertures in the dispensing ring and the accumulating ring each comprises an insert with an outer annular surface for engaging the aperture in the dispensing ring or the accumulating ring and an inner annular surface defining an aperture for receiving a finger of a user.

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22. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 13 further comprising a means for enabling a removal and replacement of the accumulating bobbin relative to the housing of the accumulating member.

10 23. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a scrubber element retained relative to the accumulating member wherein the scrubber element is removable and replaceable relative to the accumulating member.

15 24. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a finger shield arrangement comprising a tubular member for receiving a finger of a user in a mating relationship.

25. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 24 wherein the finger shield arrangement further comprises a means for constricting the tubular member about the finger of the user.

20 26. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 25 wherein the means for constricting the tubular member about the finger of the user comprises an adhesive tab.

27. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 24 wherein the finger shield arrangement further comprises a second tubular member separably coupled to the tubular member.

5 28. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 27 wherein the tubular member and the second tubular member are separably coupled by a first adhesive tab fixed to the tubular member and a second adhesive tab fixed to the second tubular member whereby the first and second adhesive tabs can be separated to enable a separation of the tubular member and the second tubular member.

10 29. A dental hygiene apparatus comprising:
a floss retaining member;
a means for retaining dental floss relative to the floss retaining member; and
a means for enabling a transfer of dental floss relative to the floss retaining member.

15 30. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 29 wherein the means for enabling a transfer of dental floss relative to the floss retaining member comprises an activating trigger.

20 31. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 30 wherein the floss retaining member comprises a floss retaining shell, a bobbin rotatably retained relative to the shell for

retaining dental floss, and an aperture in the shell for enabling dental floss to pass therethrough wherein the activating trigger is retained relative to the floss retaining shell.

32. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 31 wherein the floss retaining shell is

5 barrel-shaped with a first end and a second end and wherein the activating trigger is disposed at the first end of the floss retaining shell.

33. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 31 wherein the floss retaining shell

comprises a rounded body and wherein the activating trigger is disposed on the floss
10 retaining shell.

34. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 29 further comprising a means for

retaining the floss retaining member relative to a hand of a user.

15 35. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 34 wherein the means for retaining the
floss retaining member relative to the hand of the user comprises a ring member coupled
to the floss retaining member for receiving a finger of the user.

36. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 35 further comprising a means for

20 adjusting a circumference of the ring member.

37. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 35 wherein the means for retaining the

floss retaining member relative to the hand of the user further comprises a second ring member coupled to the floss retaining member.

38. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 34 wherein the means for retaining the
5 floss retaining member relative to the hand of the user comprises an opposed hook arrangement coupled to the floss retaining member.

39. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 38 wherein the opposed hook arrangement is coupled to the floss retaining member by a post.

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40. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 39 wherein the post is extensible and retractable in effective length.

41. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 34 wherein the means for retaining the
15 floss retaining member relative to the hand of the user includes a post with a proximal end adjacent to the floss retaining member and a distal end and wherein the means for enabling a transfer of dental floss relative to the floss retaining member includes a means for transferring dental floss relative to the distal end of the post.

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42. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 41 wherein the means for enabling a transfer of dental floss relative to the floss retaining member comprises an activating trigger.

43. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 42 wherein the activating trigger is disposed adjacent to the distal end of the post.

5 44. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 34 wherein the means for retaining the floss retaining member relative to the hand of the user comprises a band member coupled to the floss retaining member.

10 45. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 44 further comprising a means for adjusting a circumference of the band member.

15 46. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 29 wherein the floss retaining member comprises a ring with an aperture for receiving a finger of a user and a means for retaining dental floss within the ring.

20 47. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 46 wherein the means for enabling a transfer of dental floss relative to the floss retaining member comprises an activating switch operably associated with the means for retaining dental floss relative to the floss retaining member for selectively enabling a transfer of dental floss relative to the floss retaining member.

48. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 46 wherein the means for retaining dental floss relative to the floss retaining member comprises a floss retaining bobbin.

49. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 46 further comprising a means for varying 5 size of the aperture in the ring.

50. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 46 wherein the floss retaining member further comprises a second ring with an aperture for receiving a finger of a user and a means for retaining dental floss within the second ring whereby the floss retaining member 10 comprises floss retaining knuckles.

51. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 50 wherein the means for retaining dental floss relative to the floss retaining member comprises a floss retaining bobbin retained relative to the ring and a floss retaining bobbin retained relative to the second ring.

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52. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 50 wherein the means for retaining dental floss relative to the floss retaining member comprises a bobbin that surrounds the apertures in the ring and the second ring.

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53. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 52 wherein the means for enabling a transfer of dental floss relative to the floss retaining member comprises an activating trigger operably associated with the floss retaining member.

54. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 29 further comprising a finger shield arrangement comprising a tubular member for receiving a finger of a user in a mating relationship.

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55. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 54 wherein the finger shield arrangement further comprises a means for constricting the tubular member about the finger of the user.

56. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 55 wherein the means for constricting
10 the tubular member about the finger of the user comprises an adhesive tab.

57. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 54 wherein the finger shield arrangement further comprises a second tubular member separably coupled to the tubular member.

15 58. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 57 wherein the tubular member and the second tubular member are separably coupled by a first adhesive tab fixed to the tubular member and a second adhesive tab fixed to the second tubular member.

59. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 29 wherein the means for retaining dental
20 floss relative to the floss retaining member comprises a floss retaining bobbin and wherein the means for enabling a transfer of dental floss relative to the floss retaining member comprises an activating switch in combination with a means for rotating the floss retaining

bobbin.

60. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 59 wherein the activating means further comprises a means for selectively engaging the activating switch with the floss retaining
5 bobbin.

61. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 59 wherein the means for rotating the floss retaining bobbin comprises a coil spring and further comprising a means for enabling a winding of the coil spring.

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62. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 29 further comprising a scrubber element retained relative to the floss retaining member wherein the scrubber element is removable and replaceable relative to the floss retaining member.

15 63. The dental hygiene apparatus of claim 31 wherein the floss retaining shell is disk-shaped and wherein the activating trigger is disposed on the floss retaining shell.